



# MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

**Meeting Date:** October 17, 2019

**Agenda Item:** FAS Forestry Management Projects

**Action Needed:** Final

**Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation:** 5 minutes

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**Background:** FWP operates and manages 338 Fishing Access Sites to provide public access to water bodies for angling and other recreation where appropriate. In addition to developed recreational facilities, these sites often include larger areas of undeveloped land that is often forested. Left unmanaged, these forest stands can become susceptible to damage by insects and diseases and increased wildfire risk in the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Dead and dying trees can pose a threat to public safety in and around developed recreation areas. In R2, FWP proposes to conduct approximately 96 acres of forest management treatments to improve forest conditions on the K. Ross Toole, Johnsrud Park, Corrick's River Bend, and River Junction FASs along the Blackfoot River. In R1, FWP proposes to conduct approximately 20 acres of forest management treatments to improve forest conditions at Woods Bay and Horseshoe Lake FASs. If approved by the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission, the work would begin as early as November.

**Public Involvement Process & Results:** Draft environmental assessments were available for public review for 30 days in R1 and 32 days in R2. The EAs were posted on FWP's website and comments could be made directly on the EA webpage or submitted via mail or email. Legal notices were published once each in four local, regional, and statewide newspapers. A statewide news release was distributed, and FWP mailed printed copies of the EAs and emailed notices of the EAs availability to adjacent landowners and interested individuals, groups, and agencies. FWP received no public comments in support or opposition of the proposed action in R2. In R1, FWP received two comments in support of the proposed action and one comment requesting additional information about timber prices, but neither supported or opposed the action.

**Alternatives and Analysis:** "No action" (Alternative A) would allow forest succession and competition amongst trees to continue, leading to decreased stand vigor and potential for trees and stands to be less resilient to stressors and damaging agents. Dead and downed fuels might increase, negatively affecting the safety and aesthetics of the FASs. Timber would not be sold to potentially generate revenue for the FWP forest management account. FWP would continue mitigating hazard trees and maintaining improvements in these FASs. Under the "Proposed Action" (Alt B), FWP anticipates that hazard trees would be mitigated, tree vigor and resilience to insects and diseases would be improved, hazardous fuels in the WUI would be reduced, aesthetics would be improved, and the sale of timber might generate revenue for the FWP forest management account.

**Agency Recommendation & Rationale:** FWP recommends the commission approve the proposed action to move forward with project implementation. The project would provide long-term benefits for maintenance, public safety, and recreational use of these FWP sites.

**Proposed Motion:** I move the Fish and Wildlife Commission approve the proposed forest management projects on Fishing Access Sites in FWP Regions 1 and 2.